

Completed Scrap Tire Cleanup Protects Citizens at U.S.-Mexico Border

Approximately 420,000 scrap tires were cleaned up from Innor, a scrap tire site in the Mexicali, Baja CA border area. The scrap tires were removed and reused as tire derived fuel (TDF) in a local cement plant as a result of a collaboration agreement among EPA, Mexico's Environment Secretariat, the State of Baja, municipality of Mexicali, and the private sector. The cleanup protects the local community, as scrap tires piles pose potential human health and the environment threats because of fires, smoke, and disease. This cleanup milestone is a direct reflection of the bottom-up, results-oriented work performed by the [Border 2012 Program](#) task forces and border-wide work groups, and the Program's emphasis on environmental results.

Before Clean Up (May 2004)



After Clean Up (May 2005)



Background:

The cleanup of abandoned scrap tire piles is a significant binational border priority because of the known potential public and environmental threats. The tire piles are potential breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other organisms that are vectors of disease such as the West Nile virus. Also, once on fire, the smoke from tire pile fires can cause severe human health threats. One of the largest tire piles are Centinela, 1.2 million tires and Innor, 420,000 tires, located west of Mexicali and near Calexico, where the combined border population is about 800,000.

In November 2004, then Administrator Michael Leavitt of US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Minister Alberto Cardenas of the Mexican Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), signed a letter of intent to develop and cooperate on an environmentally sustainable, comprehensive scrap tire management strategy. Earlier that year, these same environmental agencies began work to evaluate the most cost-effective and sustainable practices to recycle and reuse scrap tires, including the development of public-private partnerships to help address the challenge posed by the generation of scrap tires.



In February 4, 2005, EPA, SEMARNAT, the State of Baja California, the Municipality of Mexicali, representatives of the cement industry, Cementos Mexicanos (CEMEX) and others participated in a ceremony to announce their commitment to cleanup Centinela and INNOR, two of the largest scrap tire piles in the region. In January 2005, SEMARNAT completed the removal and transport of nearly 100,000 tires to the CEMEX plant in Ensenada. Combined with EPA's funding, Secretary Cardenas and the Governor of Baja CA committed to provide sufficient funding (total cleanup is estimated at \$1 million dollars) to cleanup both Centinela and Innor by 2005.

Later that day, Secretary Cardenas participated in a related ceremony in Tijuana to promote and demonstrate their commitment to develop a variety of scrap tire reuse practices. The event involved the demonstration of “llancreto”, a product created by mixing cement with shredded scrap tires. The durability and other characteristics of this product will be evaluated to determine the feasibility of applying this product in road paving and thus provide another way to “reuse” scrap tires.

At the Border 2012 Waste Policy Forum held January 18-19, 2005 in Tijuana, the borderwide work group commented on principals serving as the foundation for developing a scrap tire strategy:

- Managing newly scrapped tires in an environmental sound manner
- Stockpiling tires is not a sustainable or desirable tire management outcome
- Reducing existing tire stockpiles to minimize disease threats and prevent tire pile fires
- Relying on a range of scrap tire uses and recycling to eliminate stockpiles, and dispose of tires in an approved landfill only where acceptable alternatives are not available
- Cleanup solutions should avoid the creation of significant new environmental emissions (such as air pollution)

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